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**NEITHER FRIEND NOR FOE: THE POSSIBILITY OF  
PAKISTANI-SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT**

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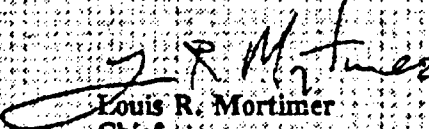
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## PREFACE

This study assesses the possibility of rapprochement between Pakistan and the Soviet Union by examining the issues that have been impediments to cordial relations. It notes that the two sides have both unrealistic expectations in their relationship and limited options that they can exercise to compel acceptance of their demands. Therefore, they will search for a compromise on the issues that divide them, and Pakistan will adjust to the new reality of the Soviet presence in South Asia by accepting an accommodation with Moscow. This accommodation will be partial, as Islamabad seeks not to offend its other friends and steers a narrow course between alignment with either superpower.

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### KEY JUDGMENTS

Ties between Islamabad and Moscow go beyond simple bilateralism and are a function of Pakistan's friendship with other powers. Moreover, when Pakistani relations with the United States have been cordial, they generally have been cool and distant with the Soviet Union, and vice-versa.

Moscow's present grievances with Islamabad are regional and global. Regionally, Pakistani relations with the Soviet Union are complicated by the Afghan issue, as well as Moscow's friendship with India. Globally, relations are complicated by the Soviet perception that Islamabad is aligned strategically with the United States.

An improvement in relations will depend on some movement on these issues. Additionally, however, both sides are burdened by unrealistic expectations. The Soviets would like Pakistan to recognize the Kabul regime and end its role as an arms conduit and safehaven for the Afghan insurgents. Islamabad would like to see a Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan, an end to Soviet-Afghan regime border violations of Pakistan, the return home of the Afghan refugees, and a Soviet regime more detached from India.

Neither side is likely to get what it wants completely because it has limited options with which to press its demands. For the Soviets, invading Pakistan because of displeasure over the Afghan issue is unlikely because of the uncertain response by India and Pakistan's friends and neighbors. The Kremlin, however, can launch border incursions of varying duration and intensity, incite Pushtun border tribes, inflame Baluch nationalism, and most likely, meddle in Pakistani internal politics. Such coercive measures outweigh the positive inducements that Moscow can offer, but there are some incentives, including economic benefits, that the Kremlin could provide as well. Pakistan has the more limited option of identifying either more or less closely with the Afghan cause. To avoid more acrimonious confrontation with the USSR, it is likely to choose the latter.

As unrealistic expectations clash with limited options, both sides are likely to search for compromise. Also, there will probably be a lively debate in Pakistan over whether or not national interests are best served by a closer association with Moscow, because already there is a Pakistani constituency for accommodation with the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the new reality of the Soviet presence in South Asia will prevail and Pakistan will seek a better relationship with Moscow in which the two sides will be neither close friends nor bitter foes.

The compromise between the two sides is likely to be marked by Pakistani recognition of Soviet interests in Afghanistan and by a Soviet military withdrawal from the embattled country, without a time limit and with the Kremlin reserving the right to intervene again if its interests are threatened. Beyond Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, although preferring Pakistan to be a compliant puppet state, will settle for a gradation of neutrality in South Asia as it does in Scandinavia and Central Europe and will acquiesce in Pakistani pursuit of a moderate pro-Western and pro-Chinese stance as long as Islamabad does not directly challenge Moscow's position in the region.

The accommodation between the two sides, however, is likely to be partial and unmarked by an excess of cordiality because there are powerful arguments against too close a Pakistani friendship with the Soviet Union. Most of these arguments concern the effect that such a friendship could have on Pakistan's friends. A partial accommodation with Moscow, for example, is likely to lead to a more distant relationship between Islamabad and Washington, especially if this rapprochement impacts adversely on the US aid program to Pakistan. Nevertheless, Islamabad is likely to undertake a balancing act to establish better relations with Moscow without alienating Washington. It will be a daunting task, but Pakistani diplomacy has shown its ability in the past to steer the narrow course necessary for the nation's survival.

## NEITHER FRIEND NOR FOE

### PAST / PROLOGUE

1. Pakistan, as a new nation born after World War II, has no historical tradition of abiding hostility--or friendship--either with the Soviet Union or the United States. In the early years of Pakistan's existence, Moscow tended to view it with suspicion as a forlorn offspring of British imperialism, overshadowed by the much larger neighboring state of India. Pakistan, founded on the bedrock of Islam, easily reciprocated Moscow's suspicions, viewing the Soviet state as a Communist, atheistic polity with ideals antithetical to its own.
2. With the passing of Stalin, however, Moscow made an attempt to establish better relations with Rawalpindi (then the capital of Pakistan).<sup>1</sup> This effort ran headlong into the two conditions then at work in Asia. The first was the contradiction posed by the Kremlin's own growing ties with India, Pakistan's archfoe. The second, in the wake of the Communist victory in Indochina, the stalemate in Korea, and the insurgency in Malaysia, was an assertive US policy determined to stop the perceived Soviet propensity to meddle internationally.
3. These two conditions defined at an early stage the twin generalizations that have marked Pakistani-Soviet relations ever since. The first generalization is that ties between Islamabad and Moscow are not simply a matter of bilateralism, but are equally a function of Pakistani relations with India, China, or the United States. Thus, early Soviet support for India on the Kashmir dispute made friendship with the United States a more enticing option for Pakistan. Later, the Sino-Indian border war of 1962, in which both Washington and Moscow sided with India, brought home the value of closer ties with China, the only nation that had humbled Pakistan's archfoe in New Delhi.
4. The second generalization that has prevailed over the decades is that the cordiality of ties between Pakistan and the Soviet Union, in broad terms, has been inversely proportional to Pakistani relations with the United States. Thus, in the postwar period, the relationship between Rawalpindi (or Islamabad) and Moscow became very acrimonious upon Pakistan's signing of security pacts with the United States in 1954 and 1959, and in the wake of the U-2 incident in mid-1960.<sup>2</sup> After the brief 1965 war and the US failure to support Pakistan, a series of Pakistani measures, including the closure of the US airbase near Peshawar, the restraint in supporting the United States in the Vietnam War, and the withdrawal from the US-sponsored SEATO and CENTO, placed some distance between Islamabad and Washington. This, in turn, led to a brief era of good feeling with the Soviet Union, a period marked by the Tashkent Declaration of 1966 and a short-lived Soviet arms sale program in the late 1960s. In the following decade, Moscow initially noted the rise of the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977 with neutral bemusement rather than hostility, while at the same time Islamabad's relations with Washington cooled because of concern over human rights and nuclear proliferation by the US administration. This series of ups and downs was brought to an abrupt end by the Soviet invasion of



Afghanistan in 1979, an event which plunged relations between Islamabad and Moscow to their lowest level since Pakistan's independence.

#### **SPECIFIC GRIEVANCES**

5. Against the backdrop of the twin generalizations described above, the present poor state of relations between Islamabad and Moscow may be ascribed to two issues: one regional, the other global.
6. Regionally, the most vexing issue that has caused ties between the two nations to plummet to their present low level, has been the Zia government's continued support to the Afghan insurgents. Moscow has the following specific grievances concerning Pakistani actions:
  - The insurgents fighting the Red Army and troops of the Democratic Regime of Afghanistan (DRA), the Soviet-installed regime, are trained on Pakistani territory by Chinese, US, and Pakistani instructors.
  - The Afghan insurgents maintain safehavens and logistical bases in Pakistan to which they repair for resupply and respite from Soviet military pressure.
  - Pakistan has served as an arms conduit through which the mujahideen are receiving increasingly more and better weaponry from China, the United States, and some Arab nations.
  - Pakistani intransigence has prevented consolidation of Soviet (and DRA) control over Afghanistan; it has prolonged the war and has increased Soviet casualties.
7. On the diplomatic level, Islamabad also has complicated the Soviet position in Afghanistan considerably. Pakistan has refused to grant legitimacy to the puppet regime in Kabul by engaging in direct negotiations with it. Among international bodies such as the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Islamabad has raised the level of visibility of the Afghan issue and led the fight for the recurrent censure of the Soviet Union, an action that has caused the Kremlin much discomfiture and displeasure.
8. On a global or strategic scale, the Kremlin also disagrees with the Zia government's foreign policy and views Pakistan with extreme suspicion as the strategic ally of the United States and China. Specific Soviet accusations in this respect have included the following:
  - Pakistan is "playing the role of gendarme, policing Southwest Asia for US interests." Islamabad has become "the servant for US and Chinese expansionist aspirations in the Middle East."<sup>3</sup>
  - Pakistan is permitting access to, or construction of, military facilities at the airbases near Sargodha and Peshawar, the naval complex at Karachi, and at sites along the Makran Coast, such as Jiwani, Ormara, and Gwadar.<sup>4</sup>

- Pakistan is forming a rapid deployment force of its own (numbering about 30,000 troops) that could be placed at the service of the United States. Washington also anticipates a key role for Pakistan in the Central Command (CENTCOM) set up by the Department of Defense in January 1983.<sup>5</sup>
  - Pakistan has been militarized by its acceptance of the 1981 US military and economic aid package worth \$3.2 billion. The nation has become a "Pentagon bridgehead," and is just "a link in the general chain of global military preparations by the United States."<sup>6</sup>
9. Pakistan for its part also has grievances against Moscow that are considerably more self-evident than the corresponding Soviet accusations against Islamabad. On the question of Afghanistan, for example, the grievances are the following:
- The Red Army has invaded Pakistan's neighbor and now maintains an occupation force of about 150,000 troops in the embattled country.<sup>7</sup>
  - Soviet scorched-earth tactics and Moscow's war against the civilian population have driven some three million Afghan refugees to take shelter across the border, a migration so substantial that it has strained to the utmost the absorptive capacity of Pakistan.
  - the Soviet Union has incited repeated (and increasing) violations of Pakistani territory by artillery and airstrikes of the puppet Kabul regime.
  - the Soviet Union is now encouraging the campaign of terrorism by KHAD, the Afghan secret intelligence service, across the border in Pakistan, against Afghan refugees, Afghan insurgent leaders and Pakistani citizens.
10. Moving beyond the issue of Afghanistan, it is also the Soviet Union that has pursued a policy of close friendship and support for India, Pakistan's nemesis, and is now rearming the Indian Armed Forces with state-of-the-art weaponry that could well be used against Pakistan. Should there be a future conflict, Islamabad cannot be certain how far Moscow would go in supporting India, especially at the present time, when substantial formations of the Red Army could, on short notice, move through Afghanistan and stand poised at the Afghan-Pakistan border.

#### UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

11. These divisive issues that keep Islamabad and Moscow far apart on both a regional and global scale are now so profound that any progress in bilateral relations in the next five years must depend on some movement, at least, on addressing the controversies and perceptions of national interests that have kept tensions between the two states at an abnormally high level. Yet, in attempting to come to grips with these problems, both sides are burdened with unrealistic aspirations.

12. Concerning the Afghan issue, both sides would like to see a resolution of the conflict, but each on its own terms. The Soviet Union, which has been willing enough to negotiate its own agenda since 1980, would like a halt to the insurgent arms traffic passing through Pakistani territory and to rebel safehavens in Pakistan. On the diplomatic level, the Soviets would like for Islamabad to engage in direct negotiations with Kabul, thereby implicitly according legitimacy to the DRA regime put in place by Moscow. Ultimately, the Kremlin would like formal recognition of the Kabul regime as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, and Pakistani acquiescence to the new reality of a permanent Soviet presence in South Asia.
13. Pakistani aspirations concerning Afghanistan are similarly unequivocal. Islamabad would like a Soviet military withdrawal from the embattled country, a cessation of border violations by forces of the Kabul regime, and the restoration of a peaceful and neutral Afghanistan to which the refugees in Pakistan could return in safety.
14. Moscow also has wider interests beyond Afghanistan toward which it would like Islamabad to display some receptivity. In overall terms, the Kremlin would like to improve its strategic position in South Asia at the expense of Washington. Ideally, this would involve uncoupling Pakistan from the United States and inducing Islamabad to pursue a strict pro-Soviet neutrality. Eventually, the Kremlin undoubtedly would like to see Pakistan participate (perhaps with India) in a Moscow-brokered Asian collective security scheme in a move to isolate China. The Soviet Union also may wish to pursue its historical goal of gaining access to the Indian Ocean through Pakistan, as alluded to by historian Arnold Toynbee and reported in secret protocols between the USSR and Germany in the fall of 1940.<sup>8</sup> Such territorial ambitions would make sense militarily as well because Soviet access to the Makran Coast of Pakistan would give Moscow a shore-based presence part way between its facilities at the northwestern end of the Indian Ocean (Perim Island and Socotra, PDRY, and the Dahlak Archipelago, Ethiopia), and its major naval installation at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. Soviet sites on the northern shore of the Arabian Sea thus would serve a very useful purpose for the maritime surveillance of US naval assets operating in the region.

#### LIMITED OPTIONS

15. From both a regional perspective in South Asia, and on a broader global scale as well, Pakistan thus has come to occupy an important position for the Soviet Union in the strategic equation between the two superpowers. Acknowledging this reality, Moscow has a number of options that can be applied, either in an attempt to bend a compliant Pakistan to its will, or to induce in Islamabad a greater responsiveness to Soviet interests. Most of these options involve coercive or subversive measures, and none are ideal or completely free of risk for the Kremlin, even though it is very much the stronger power.
16. Moscow's first option is the naked application of overwhelming military force to invade and conquer Pakistan as it did Afghanistan. This would eliminate at a stroke the safehavens and the principal arms conduit for

the mujahideen and render their position increasingly untenable. At the same time, it would eradicate what the Kremlin regards as a beachhead of US strategic interests in the Indian Ocean. The Soviets, however, are checkmated in the application of this option by an aggregate of geopolitical uncertainties that cannot be ignored.

17. Among these uncertainties, there is first the resistance of the Pakistan Army and the Pakistani people themselves. If the nomads and mountaineers of Afghanistan, badly armed and ill-trained, have proven such intractable foes, could Kremlin policymakers predict that the Pakistanis of similar racial stock, better armed and far more numerous, would be less so?
18. The second uncertainty would be the reaction of China, whose most senior officials repeatedly have reassured Pakistan of Beijing's support in time of need. While it could scarcely be imagined that China would initiate major hostilities with the Soviet Union over Pakistan, the deployment of about one million Chinese troops on the Sino-Soviet border represents an abiding and worrisome presence that the Kremlin must take into consideration if it contemplates major military action against an ally of Beijing.<sup>9</sup>
19. Third, there is the uncertain reaction of the United States, which is now helping the Pakistan Armed Forces rearm steadily. Notwithstanding the popular idea in Pakistan that the United States is a faithless ally, can Moscow really count on Washington's remaining totally aloof from a Soviet invasion of Pakistan at the very time it is determinedly aiding the Afghan resistance?
20. Fourth, in the event of a Soviet invasion of Pakistan, Kremlin policymakers also must take into consideration the Iranian reaction. Tehran's present hostility to the United States serves Soviet interests because it excludes a US presence from that part of Southwest Asia. However, among the xenophobic clerics who wield power in Iran's theocracy, the Soviet Union is regarded with--if not quite the hostility reserved for the United States--at least a large measure of fear and suspicion. A Soviet military move against Pakistan would leave Iran out-flanked by the Communist superpower on two sides, and it could provoke an anti-Soviet tilt in Tehran, if not an outright Iranian reappraisal of its own hostile policy toward the West.
21. Fifth, and most important, is the possible reaction of India. A major goal of Soviet foreign policy has been the preservation of close and friendly relations with New Delhi. Should the Red Army sweep across Pakistan, it would soon come face-to-face with India, whether or not the implausible scenario of the two sides meeting at the Indus River were played out. Regardless of the circumstances, however, it is most unlikely that New Delhi, notwithstanding its friendship with Moscow, could or would accept with equanimity a common border with a Soviet-occupied state in South Asia. It is equally unlikely under such circumstances that Indian leaders would lend any credibility to Soviet assurances that Moscow, after conquering Afghanistan and Pakistan, would have no further territorial ambitions in South Asia. The conquest of Pakistan by the Soviet Union,

therefore, would compel major strategic rethinking by India that could lead to an eventual attenuation of close Indo-Soviet ties, and significant realignments among the remaining independent states of South Asia. The Indian reaction is probably one of the major factors inhibiting further Soviet intervention in South Asia.

22. The implausibility of an outright Soviet invasion of Pakistan, however, does not imply the disavowal of military pressure. Moscow could still submit Pakistan to recurrent and punishing cross-border forays from Afghanistan. Such incursions of limited scope and duration could be carried out at will by the Kremlin through its DRA surrogates, and in the future could be orchestrated in two ways: quantitatively through increased raids of greater intensity and penetration into Pakistan, or qualitatively through the use of Soviet instead of DRA troops. Should Moscow adopt the latter option, it would be a telling sign of its growing displeasure with Pakistani policy on the Afghan issue and an unequivocal signal that the Soviet threshold of tolerance for Islamabad's support of the mujahideen was being sorely tested.
23. Another option for Moscow would be to undertake the subversion of Pakistan's regional minorities--the Sindhis, Pushtuns, and Baluchs--in a bid to destabilize the Punjab-dominated government in Islamabad. For the Pushtuns and Baluchs, such incitement might take the form of encouraging regional separatism through uniting with their ethnic brethren across national borders.
24. It might be possible in this way to subvert the Pushtuns, who live divided by the Durand Line in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The issues that the Kremlin could exploit in this instance would be the inherent Pushtun mistrust of any governmental authority in Islamabad and the extension of a Kremlin promise to establish a homeland for them in their tribal areas of Pakistan. Moscow's delicate task in pursuing this option would be to gain support for such a gambit from both Pakistani Pushtuns, many of whom are integrated into the mainstream of Pakistani life, and the Afghan Pushtuns, many of whom are among the most committed of the anti-Soviet mujahideen. The Pushtuns, moreover, have proven to be a fractious people, divided by narrow tribal loyalties. Inducing them to respond in unison against the government of Pakistan could be a complicated matter for the Kremlin, with the results uncertain. Working through the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), Moscow apparently has tried this tactic in the past and may have had a hand in the brief revolt by the Afridi and Shinwari tribes in the winter of 1985-86. However, the disturbing propensity among the Pushtuns is that tribes once bought simply do not stay bought.
25. The Kremlin would face a different problem in encouraging Baluch separatism. It is true that Moscow does retain influence among some senior Baluch leaders, but this ethnic group is split three ways among Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran. It would be difficult for the Soviets to exploit Baluch ethnicity as an issue to destabilize Pakistan, while somehow hoping to exclude the Iranian Baluchs. Even if Moscow were able to accomplish this type of subversion, it would be difficult for the government in Tehran, suspicious of the Soviet Union as it is, to avoid

the conclusion that the Kremlin was somehow meddling in Iran and encouraging separatism among Iranian minorities. Such a conclusion could lead to a reevaluation of Tehran's policy toward Moscow.

26. Because it is more risk-free than inciting separatism, a more realistic option for the Soviet Union would be to meddle covertly in Pakistani internal politics. It is not, however, likely that Moscow would throw its support behind Benazir Bhutto, who with her populist utterances and calls for social legislation has become Pakistan's most popular public figure. Her statements on foreign policy have been remarkably guarded, moderate and free of rhetorical excesses against the United States. Even in spite of her brief stopover in Moscow on her way back to Pakistan, Benazir is probably to Kremlin policymakers an unknown quantity on whom they cannot count too heavily.
27. The most likely course of action if Moscow chose to interfere in Pakistani politics would be to encourage the leftist parties of the MRD (Movement for Restoration of Democracy), a coalition of 11 opposition parties. Encouragement probably would take the form of covert financial support to enhance the viability of small leftist parties such as the Qaumi Mahaz-e-Azadi (QMA). It has been noted that four of these parties (excluding the QMA which may join later) united to form the new Awami National Party (ANP) in early May 1986.<sup>10</sup> Although the hand of Moscow is not yet discernible in this internal political development, both the QMA and the ANP are stout defenders of Soviet policy toward South Asia in their praise for the Saur Revolution in Afghanistan, their call for the recognition of the DRA, and their denunciation of the United States. Clearly, the QMA and the ANP are political organs in Pakistan to watch for signs of future Kremlin support. However, irrespective of whether this support becomes evident, both groups can be counted upon to orchestrate the chorus of opposition to the Zia government on such issues as human rights, freedom of political expression, narcotics enforcement, and nuclear proliferation. Such tactics will take on added sensitivity and serve Soviet interests should the US military and economic aid package for Islamabad be cut back because of insufficient Pakistani movement on these issues in accordance with US concerns.
28. In general, coercive or subversive measures that Moscow can bring to bear are likely to outweigh the incentives that can be dangled before Islamabad as a reward for closer relations between the two countries. Yet, the Kremlin is not totally without inducements that it can offer in exchange for greater Pakistani sensitivity to Soviet concerns. Among these is the prospect of economic assistance and the implementation of major aid projects, of which the Karachi Steel Mill is the showcase example.<sup>11</sup> The Soviets also could offer to Pakistan the prospects of increased trade with CMEA (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance) countries, and weaponry on a concessionary basis, as Moscow does to India. It is also an open question whether or not the Soviet Union, if confronted by a friendlier Pakistan, might not strike a more even-handed posture between Islamabad and New Delhi.

29. In comparison with the Soviet Union, Pakistan, as the smaller of the two nations, has options that are far more limited than those of its Communist superpower counterpart and that do not extend beyond South Asia. However, on the Afghan issue, Islamabad does have room for movement. Pakistan can, for example, choose the option of closer identification with the Afghan insurgent cause, which could include providing more or better weaponry and logistical supplies to the mujahideen. This course of action would bring Pakistan increased credibility with China, the United States, and Islamabad's friends among the moderate Arab countries. It would also increase the cost to the Soviets for their adventure in Afghanistan. However, such a course is fraught with uncertainty as well, because it runs the risk of further confrontation with the Kremlin or, at the very least, a further deterioration of bilateral relations. The uncertainty for Pakistan also is compounded by the fact that the amount of aid to the Afghan rebels that will be tolerated by Moscow without a more hostile reaction, rests very much in the eye of the beholder, in this case, the Soviets themselves as the stronger power.

#### SEARCH FOR COMPROMISE

30. As unrealistic expectations or demands by both Moscow and Islamabad clash with the limited options that the two sides can exercise to ensure compliance with their wishes, it is likely that the search for compromise will become a desirable alternative and will set the tenor of Pakistani-Soviet relations for the next five years. Ultimately, the two sides will settle upon an accommodation in which they will be neither close friends nor bitter foes. Islamabad will avoid antagonizing Moscow gratuitously whenever it can, whereas the Soviets will circumspectly seek a better relationship with Pakistan, to the extent that it will not antagonize or alienate India.
31. For Pakistan, relations with the Soviet Union will be a matter of lively debate, but rapprochement will not occur early or overnight, because there are strong arguments both for and against such a course of action. To begin with, there is a vocal constituency among the urban elite for an accommodation with Moscow. An articulate minority of opposition politicians and intellectuals point out that the Soviet Union is an Asian power, that it has occupied a position of influence in Afghanistan throughout modern times, and that it does not suit Pakistani interests to maintain an unfriendly posture toward Moscow, or to remain sandwiched between two potential foes, India and the Soviet Union. There is also the view that, because Washington and New Delhi appear to be drawing closer following PM Rajiv Gandhi's trip to the United States, Islamabad should not foreclose its options with respect to the superpowers by eschewing greater cordiality with the Kremlin. Opposition voices of influence in Pakistan also have argued that conciliatory gestures from Islamabad might find Moscow ready to make a deal on Afghanistan and disposed to offer concessions of its own, such as a guarantee of Pakistani territorial integrity, plus Soviet and DRA recognition of the Durand Line as a definitive international boundary.<sup>12</sup>

32. Rational as these perceptions may be, there are counter arguments as well against too close a Pakistani association with Moscow. Among these arguments, there is the domestic consideration that the Soviet Union has little credibility in Pakistan. As revealed in recurrent public opinion polls since 1980, the Communist superpower is regarded with great suspicion as an unfriendly state by large segments of the Pakistani population.<sup>13</sup> Some of this mistrust has arisen because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but much of it is due to Moscow's longstanding friendship and support for India.
33. Too intimate a rapprochement with Moscow also may cast doubts on Pakistan's Islamic credentials, which have been a touchstone of legitimacy for the Zia government since the early days of martial law. Islamabad, by drawing closer to Moscow, might lose credibility with, as well as aid from, the moderate Arab states of the Persian Gulf, over whom Pakistan has cast a certain mantle of protection as the strongest and most benevolent Islamic military power in the region.
34. Other negative international consequences might well accrue among Pakistan's other friends if Islamabad opts for inordinate friendliness with Moscow. It is likely, for example, that China, which has given Pakistan considerable assistance and support since the early 1960's, would reappraise its own policy toward Islamabad. Equally important would be the possible effect of Pakistani-Soviet rapprochement on the US military and economic aid program which is projected beyond 1987 in an amount of \$4.02 billion. This aid has been important to sustaining Pakistani economic growth, which has averaged 6.3 percent a year since the military coup of 1977, and in upgrading the Pakistani Armed Forces, which are the mainstay of support for the Zia government.<sup>14</sup> Both the senior military leaders and oligarchs who wield power in Pakistan, therefore, would be loathe to forego such a substantial aid program if this were to be the price of rapprochement with the Soviet Union.
35. As the pros and cons of closer ties with Moscow are pondered by Islamabad, the incentives for Pakistan to maintain a healthy distance from the Soviet Union would seem to outweigh the advantages of a closer association. However, when these incentives themselves are subjected to scrutiny, as they surely are in Pakistan, the case for rapprochement is not as unequivocal as it appears. First, the US aid package beyond 1987 is tentative and subject to yearly fluctuation, amendment, or outright cancellation. Second, China's support counted for little at Pakistan's hour of reckoning, during the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, although this might not be the case in the future. Third, the oil boom has passed in the Middle East. Pakistani remittances from the Gulf countries are down and there is likely to be far less economic aid fueled by Arab petrodollars reaching Pakistan in the future.
36. Arrayed against these uncertainties is the overwhelming reality that the Soviet Union is now a presence in South Asia, whether that presence is given substance by the Red Army itself or by a surrogate regime in Kabul that owes its existence to Moscow's intervention. Faced with this geostrategic fact, it would be unrealistic for Islamabad to abide by an



enduring policy of unyielding rigidity and distance toward the Soviet Union. It is adjusting to this undeniable reality that will cause Pakistan to tilt gradually toward accommodation with the Soviet Union, its unwelcome but thoroughly ensconced new neighbor in South Asia.

37. As Islamabad moves to improve its relations with the Kremlin, it is principally on the issue of Afghanistan that there is room for movement. Pakistani flexibility in this respect may be exercised in the future by a conscious effort to limit or prevent any escalation of arms deliveries to the mujahideen, while at the same time maintaining a policy of plausible denial toward what weaponing is permitted to pass through. If adoption of this policy accomplishes nothing more, it will at least prevent escalation of the Afghan dispute between Islamabad and Moscow to dangerously confrontational levels.
38. On the matter of the indirect negotiations on Afghanistan that have taken place in Geneva, it is likely that both sides will seek a face-saving compromise. Such a compromise will consist of a formula that will address, to the extent possible, the concerns of both Islamabad and Moscow.
39. First, this formula will acknowledge the vested Soviet interest in Afghanistan because there is no military pressure that Pakistan alone or with its friends can exert to induce a Soviet withdrawal from the embattled country. This is especially true at present, when Moscow arguably is slowly turning the tide against the mujahideen and is casting its intervention in Afghanistan to the Soviet people as a defense of their fatherland.<sup>15</sup>
40. Second, the face-saving formula, however, will include provisions for a Soviet troop withdrawal. This will meet the adamant Pakistani demand for such a concession before international forums such as the United Nations or the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The reciprocal concession to Moscow in return for such a commitment may be to allow the Kremlin to define the terms under which it would reintroduce its troops into Afghanistan, whether under conditions of deteriorating internal stability, or Soviet perceptions of external interference, for example. Such a compromise would permit Pakistan to announce that it had stuck to its principles on the Afghan issue. At the same time, it would permit the Soviet Union to announce that it was unilaterally withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, concomitant with international guarantees on noninterference in the embattled country, for example, while reserving for itself the right to intervene anew should its interests be threatened.
41. There may also be room for compromise between Islamabad and Moscow on Pakistan's overall strategic position as well. Pakistan, of course, would not accept the position of a Soviet client state, irrespective of any rapprochement between the two sides. Moscow, on the other hand, although it probably would like to reduce Islamabad to a compliant puppet, recognizes that this prospect is unlikely and probably would accept gradations of neutrality in South Asia as it does in Scandinavia and Central Europe. In this respect, the regional model that might evolve

over the years in the Indian Subcontinent would see Afghanistan converted into a Soviet puppet state, while Moscow acquiesces to a neutral Pakistan that would be moderately pro-Western or pro-Chinese, but that would refrain from hostility to the Soviet Union.

#### **IMPLICATIONS FOR US INTERESTS**

42. A Pakistani-Soviet rapprochement has implications for US interests because, as stated at the outset, ties between Islamabad and Moscow go beyond simple bilateralism and are a function of US-Pakistani relations as well. Thus, when Pakistan, adjusting to the new reality in South Asia, reaches a measure of accommodation with the Soviet Union, the result will probably be somewhat greater reserve in the relationship between Islamabad and Washington. This reserve will not come about as a dramatic foreign policy reversal by Islamabad, but as a result of small, incremental shifts to the left. These shifts will prove a daunting task for Pakistani diplomacy to implement because the pursuit of friendlier relations with Moscow will have to be carried out without unduly alienating the United States or, most of all, jeopardizing present or future US aid programs that benefit Pakistan. To accomplish this, Pakistani diplomats in their private negotiations with US authorities are likely to stress their nation's precarious position as a frontline state and to maximize the Soviet military threat to South Asia. If this gambit fails and US perceptions of Pakistani-Soviet rapprochement adversely affect Washington's aid program, then Islamabad in turn will have less cause to be sensitive to US concerns. This change, in turn, may lead Pakistan to a more equidistant policy between the two superpowers.
43. As Pakistan pursues its delicate balancing act in attempting to build some goodwill with Moscow without offending Washington, Islamabad can be counted upon to dissociate itself, at least rhetorically and publicly, from US strategic interests in Southwest Asia and to couch this position as a policy of strict nonalignment, a stand that concurrently will go down well with both the Kremlin and Pakistan's friends in the Third World. To compensate for this shift, Islamabad may undertake some movement on issues that are of concern to the United States but are of less interest to the Soviet Union, such as narcotics enforcement, human rights, and progress on democratic reforms. Pakistan has shown in the past that it can steer the narrow course that is necessary for its survival among hostile or suspicious neighbors and superpowers. This is no doubt that it can do so with the Soviet Union, and that in the future the relationship with Moscow will be one in which Islamabad is neither a friend nor foe of the Soviets.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For evidence of this change in policy, see G.M. Malenkov's statement to the Supreme Soviet in August 1953 in Raghunath Ram, Soviet Policy Towards Pakistan, New Delhi: S. Chand, 1983, p. 36. For further statements on Soviet policy during this period, see also Divendra Kaushik, "The Soviet Union's Pakistan Policy: A Survey and Appraisal," in Perspectives on Pakistan's Foreign Policy, edited by Surendra Chopra, Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University Press, 1983, p. 248 and K.D. Kapur, Soviet Strategy in South Asia, New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Kaushik, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup>Kalim Bahadur, "The Military Regime in Pakistan and Regional Security," in Pakistan and Asia Peace, edited by V.D. Chopra, New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1985, p. 146; A. Shevchnko, "Escalation of Subservience," Soviet Military Review (Moscow), no. 8, August 1981, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup>I. Garbuzov, "Pakistan in US Agressive Strategy," Soviet Military Review (Moscow), no. 2, February 1984, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup>Yu. Lugovskoi, "Washington's Plans for Pakistan," Soviet Military Review (Moscow), no. 5, May 1984, p. 50.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Turning Pakistan Into Pentagon Bridgehead," Moscow Domestic Service 0330 GMT 26 March 1986, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Report/Asia & Pacific, 28 March 1986, p. D3.

<sup>7</sup>This is the Pakistani figure given by President Zia-ul-Haq for the number of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. See interview in "Pakistan's 'No' to Russian Pressure," Pictorial News Review, (Karachi), September-October 1985, np.

<sup>8</sup>J.C. Hurewitz, ed., Documents of Near East Diplomatic History, New York: J.C. Hurewitz, 1951, p. 280; Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, vol. VIII, London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954, p. 691.

<sup>9</sup>For examples of Chinese statements in support of Pakistan, see K. Arif, ed., China Pakistan Relations 1947-1980, Lahore: Vanguard Publishers, 1984, pp. 193-202.

<sup>10</sup>The four parties are the National Democratic Party (NDP), the Pakistan National Part (PNP), the Mazdoor Kisan Party (MKP), and the Awami Tehrik (AT). See Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Four 'Left Parties' Merge," Muslim (Islamabad), 4 May 1986, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>The Karachi Steel Mill was initiated around 1973 and inaugurated in 1981. It cost \$2.5 billion granted to Pakistan as a loan at concessionary rates.

<sup>12</sup>For a summary of the arguments for rapprochement with the Soviet Union, see Razimullah Azmi, "Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Realpolitik or Principles," Muslim Magazine (Islamabad), 23 May 1986, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup>Ijaz S. Gilani, ed., Gallup Political Weather Report July 1985, Islamabad: Gallup Pakistan, 1985, pp. 16-19.

<sup>14</sup>"Opium, US Aid Keep Pakistan's Economy Going," Telegraph (Calcutta), 8 June 1986, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>"Signs of Concession in Afghanistan," Soviet Union and the Middle East (Jerusalem), vol. X, no. 11, 1985, p. 14.